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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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State Department review completed

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SUMMARY

GENERAL

1. Mendes-France sees possible last-minute agreement at Geneva (page 3).

25X1

FAR EAST

3. President Rhee now accepts invitation to visit United States (page 5).

SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. French believe Viet Minh may be attempting to cut Tonkin delta in half (page 5).

25X1

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GENERAL

I. Mendes-France sees possible last-minute agreement at Geneva:

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Mendes-France looks for a possible last-minute agreement at Geneva on 19 July,

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Comment: The Communists are expected to offer Mendes-France a settlement on Indochina, in advance of his 20 July deadline, which the French premier will find it difficult to refuse.

The offer is expected to include a cease-fire proposal and an outline for a political settlement requiring further negotiations. Ambiguities in the Communist proposals would be designed to make agreement easier.

The French were mistaken in believing that Chou En-lai had withdrawn Communist demands on behalf of the "resistance movements" in Laos and Cambodia. It is believed that Communist proposals will involve the partitioning of Vietnam on terms very favorable to the Communists, Communist control of some part of Laos, and some form of recognition for Communist forces in Cambodia.

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FAR EAST

25X1A 3. President Rhee now accepts invitation to visit United States:

[redacted]
President Rhee told Ambassador Briggs on 10 July he has now decided to accept an invitation to visit the United States and wishes to depart "within two or three weeks." Rhee expects to bring a predominantly military staff with him, including Defense Minister Sohn, Army Chief of Staff General Chong Il-kwon, and two high-ranking air force officers.

Briggs reports he had never seen the president in such poor physical condition. Rhee's mind wandered several times during a half-hour conversation, and he appeared vague and confused.

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Comment: Rhee previously rejected this

invitation,

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[redacted]
Rhee's primary objective is to obtain American aid in expanding the South Korean armed forces. A secondary objective is to redirect American interest away from Japan as the basis for the United States' position in Asia.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. French believe Viet Minh may be attempting to cut Tonkin delta in half:

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[redacted]
The start of a Viet Minh attempt to cut the Tonkin delta in half, isolating Hanoi, may, [redacted] be indicated [redacted] by increased enemy activity during the past few days in the Luc Nam and Hung Yen areas, on the northern and southern edges of the present French defense line.

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Comment: Enemy activity in these areas, some of which involved elements of the Viet Minh divisions returned from Dien Bien Phu, has been coincident with increased pressure from the north and west of Hanoi. An effort to split the delta and thus hasten the fall of Hanoi presumably would be accompanied by an attack on the French defense line northwest of Hanoi, where enemy intelligence units are reported active.

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